

# Diversity and Civic Leadership Program

## Year-end performance summary

FY 2008-09

July 2008 through June 2009

Organization: Urban League

**GOAL: Community Involvement**, Increase the number and diversity of people who are involved and volunteer in their communities and neighborhoods.

1. Provide short narratives describing examples of how two to three individual participants in the training program are contributing to building the organizational capacity of their organizations and/or expanding their personal leadership skills.
  
2. Examples of developing culturally appropriate strategies to bring constituency together to build community identity, understanding of existing City governance structures, and/or skills to analyze City power dynamics.
  - **Recycling:** Partnered on outreach project with Office of Sustainable Development to educate African American community about recycling issues and invite people to educational and advocacy opportunities.
  - **Social Justice Forums:** Held three forums focused on advocacy, community issue campaigns and “How to make the City work for you” workshop in partnership with ONI.
  - **Language:** 6 languages have been spoken in project organized activities.
  - **The State of Black Oregon:** Completed development and published document for first time in 17 years describing the disparate impacts of the African American community in Oregon covering health, education, economics (employment, business, homeownership), criminal justice and civic engagement. As part of the process we brought a wide section of our community together to collaborate on policy recommendations and direction of the report. Partnered with Black United Fund, Portland Housing Center, OPAL, the Education Equity Center, Black Studies Dept at PSU, Coalition for a Livable Future, the Healthy Homes Initiative, and the Health Equity Initiative. The report will be the only one in the country with a section on African immigrants and refugees thanks to partnership with Center for Intercultural Organizing. Organized community discussion in October with 28 people. This has been very significant in unifying and solidifying the African American community consensus on policy priorities in the city, county and state as we head into 2009. Mayor Adams, Amanda Fritz’s representative, and ONI Direction Amalia Alarcon were among the nearly 100 people and elected officials

who attended the launch. ONI was acknowledged as one of the organizations whose funding enabled the Urban League to produce the report.

- **Green jobs and the economic stimulus package:** Developed relationships with Coalition for a Livable future and OPAL to develop and advocacy strategy on green jobs and the economic stimulus package.
- **African/African American dialogues:** Worked with CIO and Our United Villages to bridge the cultural gaps between the communities of the African Diaspora here in Portland. Black United Fund now sponsoring the dialogues. Several leaders have emerged to help organize future dialogues. Some participants attended a conference in Seattle to discuss increasing African American awareness on immigration issues effecting the African and Caribbean community.
- **Black Student Unions:** Developing closer relationships with Black students and teachers at PSU, Jefferson, and Parkrose high School with goal to help strengthen BSU organizations and bring students from individual high schools together to develop common strategies.
- **Cascade AIDS Project:** Building strong relationship with Cascade aids Project to support outreach efforts to African Americans at high risk of HIV/AIDS infection.
- **Portland African American Leadership Team:** Supported development of PAALT, a coalition building effort to bring Black leaders together to develop common goals and strategies.
- **Voter registration:** Organized several non-partisan voter registration events for Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> election, one “Power2Vote” in partnership with NAACP and Bus Project. Also, “Exercise your Vote, Exercise Your Voice” - held at Concordia University; a voter registration and cultural event. Registered nearly 400 voters.
- **Granparents raising grandchildren:** Organized “Carolyn Smith Community Support Event,” taking lead to support the right of this grandmother to retain rights to her grandchildren, who were to be adopted out of the family. Developing culturally competent fostering and adoption policies with State DHS.
- **Alzheimer’s disease conference:** Organized event on Alzheimer’s disease and the African American community, called “Hold on to your Memory”, bringing together African American elders and their care-givers.
- **Literary Fair:** “Do the Right Thing and Read,” a literary fair to promote reading held in partnership with North Portland Library.
- **Election witness event with seniors:** 40 mostly seniors came to event to be eye-witnesses to historic election of African American president. Channel 12 came out and interviewed many of our elders after the decision and table captains recorded responses from elders.
- **State legislative agenda:** Working with African American Alliance and NAACP.
- **Education policy:** Working with Leaders Roundtable (I think with PPS?)
- **City Council candidates’ forums:** Worked with DCL groups to organize culturally specific candidates’ forums for the African American, Native American, Latino and immigrant/refugee communities, which historically have had minimal participation in local candidate forum efforts.
- **City Budget Forum:** Partnered with DCL groups to host a city budget forum turning out over 375 residents from their communities. Urban League brought 15

people to City Hall to support the ONI budget. For some, it was the first time they had been to a City Hall meeting.

- **“Seeds of Hope” black history celebration:** Held in City Hall, involving art, history and food sharing. The event contributed to community building and connected African Americans to the role of Bureaus and City Commissioners. 300 attendees.
- **‘Be Job Ready’ trainings:** Organized two trainings for unemployed African Americans and others. 25 people at each session.
- **Education and Employment Task Forces:** Graduates of the Social Justice and Civic Leadership Training program met and out of the meeting formed two task forces on issues critical to African American community with goal of organizing campaigns.
- **Oregon Voice:** Partnership with Westerns States Center to develop a collaborative data base to maximize civic engagement. It will allow us to input and use specific information from our data base, such as voting records, ethnicity demographics, etc.
- **Juneteenth celebrations:** One of the coordinating organizations with other African American groups on the Juneteenth celebrations.
- **Door to door in outer SE Portland:** Partnering with OPAL, Concordia University Outreach Program, and the Skanner planning for outreach and community conversations amongst African Americans in Southeast and East County.
- **2009 legislative agenda:**
  - **Health Equity Initiatives:** Partnering with DCL groups on health equity and hired an organizer to organize African American involvement in health reform. Organized a busload of African Americans to participate in a Lobby Day in Salem, organizing a post-card campaign and tabling at local health clinics. As result, our coalition was successful in securing the inclusion of health equity principles in HB2009 and HB2116, passed during the session.
  - **Re-establishment of a Civil Rights enforcement unit:** Organized delegation to testify and participate in Senate hearings in Portland supporting re-establishing Civil Rights enforcement unit in Department of Justice.
  - **Safe Schools Bill:** Generated support for legislation regarding bullying and harassment in schools. Partnered with Basic Rights Oregon.
- **DTV transition:** Hired community outreach organizer to assist over 1,000 mostly African American individuals and households with the DTV transition.
- **Watch Party for Judge Sonia Sotomayor’s Supreme Court justice nomination:** In partnership with Office of Human Relations and Human Rights Commission organized TV watch party with 30 people attending.
- **Climate Action Plan town hall:** Hosted this event.
- Approximate value of leveraged grants and volunteer hours: \$ 119,240

3. Have you convened any gatherings/meetings or events to accomplish this goal/program function? If so, how many gatherings/meetings? Attendance?

- 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr: 26 gatherings, 1,490 participants
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr: 400 participants
- 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr: 6 large events, 250 participants

**GOAL: Capacity Building**, Strengthen neighborhood and community capacity to build identity, skills, relationships and partnerships.

## Communications

4. Describe the methods of communication currently used to outreach to your group.
  - Direct mail
  - Email
  - Newsletter
  - Website
  - Individual phone calls for event mobilization
  - Online Survey Tool (Survey Monkey)
  - Tabling at community events which has helped us build a list of people who want to be engaged in advocacy and civic engagement activities.
  - Distribute flyers and posters widely in the community, including hair salons, coffee shops, and businesses.
  - Articles about our various campaigns in the Skanner, Observer, the Oregonian, KBOO and KBMS.
5. How many people are receiving these communications on a regular basis?
  - 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr: 5800+ people via direct mail, email notices and newsletter. 1,500 get the newsletter.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr: 2000 people.
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr: 2000 people.
6. Describe one example of how one of these communication strategies is supporting your community building and livability efforts, fostering dialogue on policy issues, or publicizing opportunities for involvement with the City?
  - Urban league has publicized their Civic engagement work through several talk shows targeted toward the African American community.
  - The communication and outreach on our campaign to support Carolynn Smith resulted in a wide discussion on DHS policy of adoption, fostering and culturally competent services. Representatives of Carolynn's support group also testified before city council urging Council support of her petition to stay the adoption hearing.

- The community outreach through tabling; and publicity around the SOBO report has helped to foster dialogue on policy issues, as has the communications we have developed on health reform, child welfare policies, education and employment.
- The State of Black Oregon generated extensive publicity including front page and Editorial coverage in the Oregonian. We appeared on Think Out Loud, radio and TV talk shows.

7. Are there plans to develop/implement any new communications strategies?

### **Leadership development**

8. As a result of this project describe one method to develop leadership opportunities for your constituents to become effective advocates on City public involvement initiatives and/or initiatives by your organization to achieve economic and social equity? How many people have participated? (Leadership Academy question): Provide a short narrative on how one or two trainings provided contributes to building the organizational capacity of participants' organizations and/or are building leadership skills of the participants?)

#### **Social Justice and Civic Leadership Trainings**

- Navigating city structures, 30 people in attendance.
  - Tackling Inequity through Policy change
  - Building a Policy Advocacy Campaign, with the goal of learning the basics of policy advocacy on the city, county and state level.
- Convened meeting of leaders that graduated from the training program. Goal was to connect previously trained leaders with engagement opportunities in City and State legislature. A Social Justice Group and two task forces (Education and Employment) were formed at the meeting with goal of organizing campaigns. 20 people attended.
- The project brought 15 people to City Hall to support the ONI budget. For some, it was the first time they had been to a City Hall meeting.
- 40 people in spring sessions

### **Partnerships and Collaborations**

9. Describe a new or update on a collaboration or partnership developed as a result of this project with other community organization(s), neighborhood and/or business association(s) where there may be opportunities to work on common community and neighborhood livability issues?

- Held culturally specific City Council candidates forums for the African American, Native American, Latino and immigrant/refugee communities, which historically have had minimal participation in local candidate forum efforts.

- Jointly hosted a city budget forum turning out over 375 residents from their communities.

Community groups:

- DCL partner organizations
  - Center for Intercultural Organizing
  - IRCO – Immigrant Refugee Community Organization
  - Native American Youth and Family Center
  - Latino Network
- African American Alliance
- Basic Rights Oregon
- Black Student Union, Jefferson High School
- Black Student Union, Parkrose High School
- Black Student Union, PSU
- Black Studies Dept at PSU
- Black United Fund
- Black United Fund
- Bus Project
- Coalition for a Livable Future
- Education Equity Center
- Health Equity Initiative
- Healthy Homes Initiative
- NAACP
- OPAL
- Our United Villages
- Portland African American Leadership Team
- Portland Housing Center
- Western States Center

Government agencies

- Department of Human Services, State
- Office of Neighborhood Involvement
- Office of Sustainable Development
- Multnomah County Libraries, North Portland Library
- Office of Human Relations
- Human Rights Commission

**GOAL: Public Impact,** Increase community and neighborhood impact on public decisions.

**Representation on City advisory committees**

10. How many people have participated on city advisory committees, boards, commissions?

13 Urban League constituents have participated in city processes, boards and commissions including:

- Board chair of PDC
- Public Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) (ONI)
- Oregon Community Fund Leadership Council
- 3 participants on the Diversity and Civic Leadership Advisory Committee (ONI)
- 6 participants on ONI BAC
- Portland Commission on Disability
- Education Reform task force, Oregon Department of Education

### **Culturally appropriate public involvement models**

11. Please describe any opportunities this quarter you have had to engage with City public involvement efforts. What have been some of the successes or challenges in engaging in this process?

- We are participating in the Budget Advisory Committee at this very crucial period, which will determine the extent of cutbacks on our and other ONI programs. The Urban League and the other DCL partners gave a presentation to city bureau representatives on our work to help establish relationship and perhaps future collaboration with organizations of color.
- The DCL partners proposed to organize a community meeting on the City Budget. The main difficulty was inability to get a commitment from the Mayor and Commissioners to attend. The process sent an unfortunate message to the communities of color who were organizing the event.